

IN THE CLAIMS:

Set forth below in ascending order, with status identifiers, is a complete listing of all claims currently under examination. Changes to any amended claims are indicated by strikethrough and underlining. This listing also reflects any cancellation and/or addition of claims.

Claim 1 (Currently Amended)

A method for controlling access to a product, the method comprising:

- (a) receiving a request for a product from a requestor;
- (b) ~~generating, substantially at the time the request is received, a license string that controls access to the product, the license string being generated by encoding at least one of: (i) information associated with the product; and (ii) information associated with the request, wherein generating the license string comprises using a cryptographic process to generate the license string that controls access to the product and wherein the cryptographic process generates the license string by encoding~~ information corresponding to at least one of:
 - a date of creation of the product;
 - a version of the product;
 - a date of at the request for the product; and
 - a date of generation of the license string;
- (b) verifying the license string by:
 - decoding the license string to identify the information; and
 - determining that the information is within a valid range; and
- (c) allowing access to the product based on verifying~~transmitting~~ the license string ~~to the requestor.~~

Claim 2 (Currently Amended)

The method of claim 1 further comprising providing a dialog box, and wherein receiving the license string~~request~~ comprises receiving the license string~~request~~ via the dialog box~~a distributed communications network~~.

Claim 3 (Currently Amended)

The method of claim 1 further comprising providing an entry field, and wherein receiving the license string request comprises receiving the license string via the entry field~~payment information from the requestor.~~

Claim 4 (Currently Amended)

The method of claim 13 wherein the cryptographic process generates the license string by encoding~~further comprising verifying the received payment information using block ciphers.~~

Claim 5 (Canceled)

Claim 6 (Currently Amended)

The method of claim 1 wherein the cryptographic process generates the license string by encoding the information as a character text string.

Claim 7 (Currently Amended)

The method of claim 1 wherein the cryptographic process generates the license string, ~~the license string being encoded~~ by encoding the information as an upper case alphanumeric string excluding capital O, capital I, and numbers 0 and 1.

Claim 8 (Canceled)

Claim 9 (Currently Amended)

The method of claim 1 wherein the license string includes a first checksum~~validation information, and verifying the license string comprises generating a second checksum based on the information and comparing the second checksum with the first checksum.~~

Claim 10 (Previously Presented)

The method of claim 1 wherein the license string controls access to a single facility.

Claim 11 (Previously Presented)

The method of claim 1 wherein the license string controls access to a plurality of facilities.

Claim 12 (Canceled)

Claim 13 (Currently Amended)

The method of claim 1 wherein access to the product is allowed~~functions~~ for only a predetermined period of time in the absence of verifying~~if the license string is not entered into the product.~~

Claim 14 (Currently Amended)

The method of claim 13 wherein allowing access to the product comprises allowing access to the license string~~enables the product to function beyond the predetermined period of time.~~

Claims 15-50 (Canceled)

Claim 51 (New)

A method for controlling access to a product, the method comprising:

(a) receiving a license string that controls access to the product, the license string being generated by encrypting:

a first information item associated with the product; and

a second information item associated with a request for the product;

(b) verifying the license string by:

decrypting the license string to identify the first information item and the second information item;

determining that the first information item is within a first valid range; and

determining that the second information item is within a second valid

range; and

(c) allowing access to the product based on verifying the license string.

Claim 52 (New)

The method of claim 51 further comprising providing an entry field, and wherein receiving the license string comprises receiving the license string via the entry field.

Claim 53 (New)

The method of claim 51 wherein the license string is generated by encrypting the first information item and the second information item using a cryptographic process.

Claim 54 (New)

The method of claim 51 wherein the license string is generated by encrypting the first information item and the second information item as an alphanumeric string excluding capital O, capital I, and numbers 0 and 1.

Claim 55 (New)

The method of claim 51 wherein the first information item corresponds to at least one of:
a date of creation of the product; and
a version of the product.

Claim 56 (New)

The method of claim 51 wherein the second information item corresponds to at least one of:
a date of the request for the product; and
a date of generation of the license string.

Claim 57 (New)

The method of claim 51 wherein the license string includes a first checksum, and verifying the license string comprises generating a second checksum based on the first information item and the second information item and comparing the second checksum with the first checksum.